Interview with BGEN William Weise, USMC (Ret.), commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, present at the Battle of Dai Do, South Vietnam (30 April -2 May 1968) and wounded in action. Interviewed by Jan K. Herman, Historian, Navy Medical Department, 29 December 2004.

Aren't you originally from Philadelphia?
Right. I was born and raised there.

When did you join the Marine Corps?
In 1951.

Did you serve in Korea?
Yes. I spent a year in Korea. I got there about a month before the war ended so I got a month of actual fighting and then another month of patrolling along the Demilitarized Zone. I was a rifle platoon commander, a mortar section leader, and I was also the executive officer of a rifle company in the 5th Marines.

What did you do between Korea and Vietnam?
I did quite a few things. I was an instructor at the Officer's Basic School at Quantico. I served 2 years as a supply officer. I was a rifle company commander in peacetime--1959-60. I spent 2 years in Force Reconnaissance Company. We did all those neat things like jumping out of airplanes and swimming out of submarines. For about 14 months I was the operations officer of an infantry battalion as a captain. I was assigned to inspector instructor duty at the 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company in Mobile, Alabama. That was followed by a year at the Army Command and General Staff College, followed by a year in Korea as an advisor to the Republic of Korea Marine Corps. Then I spent not quite a year in Vietnam as an infantry battalion commander. The reason I didn't finish my year is because I was medevaced out.

I'd like to talk with you about Vietnam. How did you find out that you had orders to Vietnam and when did that happen?
Well, I volunteered for Vietnam when I was in Korea in 1966-67. I was a major at that time. They had a 3-week training period back in the States for familiarization with booby traps and the peculiarities of the Vietnam situation.

I arrived in Vietnam on the 12th of October 1968. Just a week before that, I was promoted to lieutenant colonel so I was a brand new lieutenant colonel when I arrived. I was assigned to the 3rd Marine Division. I was fortunate enough to get an infantry battalion within 2 weeks of arriving in country. I wanted one very badly. They wanted to give me the recon battalion because of my experience in reconnaissance but I asked the commanding general to give me the first infantry battalion that came open. Fortunately, I got it. I took command of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines known as the "Magnificent Bastards."

On the 22 October 1967 Wes Hammond, my predecessor, was wounded on an operation and medevaced out. His executive officer, Lewandowski was killed, and I got orders in the middle of the night to get up there and take command. I got up there as fast as I could. At the time I was about 50 miles below the DMZ visiting a battalion that was on an operation. I got up there and took command and kept it until the 2nd of May when I was medevaced out at the end of the Battle of Dai Do.

Tell me about Dai Do.

First of all, we had been operating in the Demilitarized Zone area for almost the entire time I was there. We had frequent contact with regular North Vietnamese Army units. My battalion had taken a number of casualties because of some tough firefights we were in. By the time the Battle of Dai Do started we were under strength but were really a well honed, very effective fighting force. But our companies were rather small. At that time we had four rifle companies and a headquarters company in the battalion. I had a lot of attachments because we were a battalion landing team and part of a special landing force. It was very similar to the current day Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The authorized (T/O) strength of each rifle company was 207 officers and men. But we were down to around 125 each. My mortar platoon and other units were also similarly reduced in size due to casualties, rotations, and that sort of thing.

Dai Do was not fought in my tactical area of responsibility. It was over along the Bo Deiu River. We were operating north of the Cua Viet River east of where that battle took place. Dai Do and surrounding hamlets were in the 2nd ARVN Regiment's tactical area of responsibility.

The Cua Viet River was a critical supply route for all the units that operated in the northern part of Vietnam. About 95 percent of the logistic support came via Navy lighters--small craft. They off loaded the cargo ships in the South China Sea and ferried supplies up the river to Dong Ha city, where they were off loaded on a ramp. The supplies were then carried to the Dong Ha Combat Base. Dong Ha Combat Base lay right along Route 1 which was the main north-south route in Vietnam. In fact, it was the only paved road in Vietnam at that time, except within the big cities. The Cua Viet River was a critical to us, and the enemy frequently tried to interrupt the flow of traffic. They would fire on the Navy craft going up and down the river.

Very early on the morning of 30 April--about 4 o'clock--the enemy fired on a Navy utility boat going up the river and hit it with rocket and recoilless rifle fire. It damaged the craft and killed one or two sailors, as I recall. The boat returned fire and limped up to Dong Ha.

I was monitoring what was going on. We had good relations with the river assault group. I had a radio tuned to their net because when they were hit in our area, we immediately responded and tried to get the enemy who was shooting at them. On this occasion, I was given the task to go over and see what was in that little village of Dai Do and also to clear it if the enemy was still there. When I first got the report and we were given the orders, we didn't know what was there. We expected a small unit.

At the time, my battalion was spread out all over our area in a series of patrol bases. We had done some heavy fighting in our area and had been fairly successful in intercepting the enemy infiltration units at night with our ambushes. So when I was given the order to clear Dai Do, I only had one full company available--Hotel Company. They were operating not too far from that area. I ordered the company commander--CAPT James L. Williams--to get his company together and go over and take a look to see what was there. But first of all, I had to get permission to move the boundary line to the west. Our boundary line ended east of Dai Do, and I wasn't going to send any of my troops over there unless we had full authority to fire whenever we wanted. If we didn't get the boundary changed, we'd have to coordinate everything through the ARVN and that was an exercise in futility.

It took us several hours to get that permission. Meanwhile, CAPT Williams assembled his company. When I say Dai Do, there actually were several hamlets involved in that complex.

Dai Do was the main village but the little hamlet along the river from which the fire came that damaged the LCU was in a little hamlet called An Lac. Hotel Company had to cross a stream to get there. When they got to the edge of the stream they started taking heavy fire from two points--from a hamlet right across from where they were--Dong Huan--and the village of Dai Do.

We found out that there were enemy not only in An Lac, where the fire initially came from, but also in Dong Huan and Dai Do. And we had to knock the enemy out of Dong Huan before we could clear An Lac.

One of my four rifle companies--Echo Company--was not under my operational control at the time the battle started. It was located at a bridge along Highway 1 where they were expecting an enemy attack. They were under the direct operational control of the 3rd Marine Division headquarters.

Also, my Golf Company was up north in my tactical area of responsibility and I had to get permission before I moved them out of that area because they were screening that part of the front for the Division. So I had to get permission from higher headquarters to move them out of that area, and I put that request in. In addition, one of my platoons from Foxtrot Company was in a village on the eastern edge of my TAOR and we had to get permission before we could move that.

In essence, when the battle started, I only had direct control over one company, two platoons, of a second company. When Hotel Company crossed the river, they did a masterful job of assaulting Dong Huan. They moved into Dong Huan but were taking heavy enemy fire from another village--Dai Do--and I ordered the two platoons from Foxtrot Company, mounted on amphibian tractors, to attack Dai Do.

The enemy's strength in Dai Do was too strong for those two platoons to penetrate so they were caught out in the open and pinned down. Later that night when darkness fell, I ordered those two platoons to join Hotel Company at Dong Huan, which had been cleared and consolidated.

The company commander from Hotel Company--Williams--was badly wounded and medevaced. We had a 1st lieutenant named Scotty Prescott, who took over. Scotty Prescott was wounded and medevaced on May 2nd, 2 days later. Vic Taylor then took over. So they had three company commanders in that company for that 3-day battle.

We still hadn't investigated An Lac, where the fire originally came from and I had no troops immediately available. I had gotten permission to pull Golf Company in from their location up north. Golf was supposed to get a helicopter lift but after the first airplanes landed, they came under such heavy enemy artillery fire that we had to cancel the airlift. Golf Company had to move on foot down to where my battalion headquarters was located. We eventually moved them up to the battle area by Navy LCM-8s. However, they didn't get there until the next morning, so they were not available that first afternoon.

By the way, during the early part of that battle--the first day and first night--I had my mobile command post aboard a Navy monitor. It was an LCM-6, armored on the sides and had a fair amount of firepower. LT Nelson was the exec for that river group and he was aboard that monitor. I controlled the battle from there because I was up high above the river and able to observe what was going on on the ground. My ability to see the battlefield was much greater from the monitor than if I were on the ground.

My regimental commander--COL Milton Hull--was commanding officer of 3rd Marine Regiment. When he ordered me to continue the attack, I told him we were already committed

with everything I had. So he attached Bravo Company from 1st Battalion 3rd Marines, which was south of the river. That afternoon, Bravo Company, commanded by LT Norris, mounted on amtracs, crossed the river and attacked An Lac. We put a lot of fire on An Lac before they moved. But as soon they jumped off those amtracs, they came under very heavy enemy fire. Early in that firefight, LT Norris was killed and Bravo Company took heavy casualties.

They got about one-third the way through the village. I ordered the one remaining officer to form a perimeter and hold what they had and not to try to take the rest of the village. They were having difficulties getting their injured out, etc. Obviously, the young officer was pretty frightened. When it got dark I moved ashore with my command group to see that they were set up properly for the night.

About halfway through the night, I ordered Bravo Company to send a patrol out to check out the rest of the village. The enemy had pulled out so Bravo Company occupied the rest of An Lac.

As daylight was breaking on the 1st of May, we saw large numbers of enemy troops in the open just north of An Lac and east of Dong Huan. We had a turkey shoot. There were a lot of them out there and we called in artillery. They were also in range of our rifles and machine guns. It was really a morale-booster because it was the first time I had ever seen more than a few enemy out in the open during daylight. They just didn't do that. I wasn't quite sure what they were doing out there. Initially, they were just sitting in place and I wasn't sure whether it was a group that moved out of An Loc or whether they were reinforcements coming in from the north to counterattack. At any rate we really chewed them up.

Meanwhile, Golf Company under the command of CAPT J.R. Vargas moved on foot under heavy enemy fire from Lam Xuan (East), which was the village where they were located, along what we called Jones Creek to the Cua Viet River to Mai Xai Chan, where my main command post was located. There they boarded two Navy landing craft (LCM-8s) along with two tanks and ferried up the river to join in the battle.

I boarded a skimmer boat, which was a small 14-foot fiberglass open boat powered by a 35 horsepower outboard. I scooted down the river to meet them as they were coming up. I gave Vargas orders to land just to the right of Bravo Company and attack straight forward and seize Dai Do.

Well, he did that but they didn't get ashore until 10 in the morning because, even though the Navy craft were available, they couldn't get in to pick up Golf Company until the tides rose. Instead of a night attack, which I had hoped we were going to run, we had to do it in daylight.

After some heavy fighting, Vargas, with the support of those two tanks, got into Dai Do and drove the enemy out.

The fighting was extremely heavy from bunker to bunker. It was kind of reminiscent of the bunkers the Japanese fought from during World War II. These enemy positions were extremely well constructed. They had these A-frame bunkers they had built from bamboo logs and various other materials. They were strong enough to resist the crushing action of our 50-ton M-48 tanks. All positions were mutually supporting. In order to attack one bunker, you would come under fire from two or three others. They also had barbed wire and fighting holes. These defenses were extremely well camouflaged and very difficult to locate.

At any rate, after fighting through Dai Do, Golf Company had taken quite a few casualties. When they were counter-attacked, they were forced to move into a section of the village right on the edge. I ordered Vargas to form a tight perimeter and hold on as best he could. He did. We tried to relieve him by sending some reinforcements out on the afternoon of

1 May--Foxtrot Company--but they got pinned down as soon as they moved out into the open. Then I took Bravo Company, which still had 80 men in it, and we mounted them on amtracs and sent them forward to reinforce Golf Company. But when they reached the edge of the village, they were stopped by heavy fire and and couldn't go any further. And they took heavy casualties.

So there we were as darkness started to fall with Bravo Company now pinned down in the open. We had Golf Company isolated in the village of Dai Do about 700 yards from where I was located. And we didn't have the means to help them out. During that night Golf Company withstood several enemy counterattacks but held on. With some difficulty, we were able to resupply them.

However, late that same afternoon, just before dark, Echo Company reported in. They had been up along Highway 1 defending the bridge. But when they got authority to move and rejoin my battalion, they moved overland from the highway. It was about 10 kilometers. They took some fire as they moved, mostly from enemy snipers. There was a stream that separated us and it was almost unfordable. It was about 5 feet deep where they had to cross. A lot of Marines are pretty short and they were carrying these heavy loads of weapons, ammunition, etc. CAPT [James] Livingston got about six of the tallest men in his company, had them strip down, stand in the middle of that stream at its deepest part, and form a daisy chain. They passed the small Marines, who couldn't ford the stream, from one tall Marine to another and got the whole company across in short order. It was quick thinking on the part of Livingston. He was the other company commander who earned the Medal of Honor during that battle.

At any rate, I was going to use Livingston before daylight. In the meantime, under the cover of darkness, one of his platoons went up and helped pull Bravo Company back to An Lac, where they stayed for the remainder of the battle. Echo Company got ready to launch an attack before daybreak. We wanted to do that under the cover of darkness and we did. And they fought their way back into Dai Do. When they reached the edge of Dai Do, Livingston rallied his reserve platoon and punched through. And they started to clear the village out once again.

At the same time, Vargas, with the 50 remaining men in his company, broke out of his little perimeter and helped clear part of the village. So the two companies together retook the village of Dai Do. But it took about 3 or 4 hours to secure it. We then had what was left of Echo Company and Golf Company in Dai Do. Bravo Company was in An Lac. Hotel and Foxtrot Companies were in Dong Huan.

I ordered Hotel Company to move around the flank of Echo Company and continue north to the village of Dinh To. They did, but they got about two-thirds the way through Dinh To and underwent a combination of a meeting engagement and a counter-attack by the enemy. They were in danger of being overrun. Scotty Prescott asked for help but I didn't have anybody to send right then. While I was thinking of what to do, Livingston, who was in Dai Do, without command from me and on his own initiative, rounded up what was left of his company (about 35 Marines including his motor platoon), and they ran to the aid of Hotel Company. Together, Echo and Hotel beat off the enemy counter-attack and continued forward.

Meanwhile, Scotty Prescott was wounded and medevaced. LT Vic Taylor took over command of Hotel Company. And the two companies moved forward together. But both companies were down pretty low then. They didn't get too far before they underwent another enemy counterattack and I ordered them to pull back. It was obvious to me at that time that the enemy was just too strong for those two company remnants to continue the attack.

At this point, Livingston was hit and badly wounded. He was a captain and the senior man of those two companies. He ordered them back but intended to stay where he was and provide covering fire. But his men wouldn't allow that, and they dragged him back. They got back into Dai Do and we formed a defensive perimeter there.

At that point, we had what was left of Echo Company and Golf Company and Hotel Company, all in Dai Do. By this time it was about 1 or 2 in the afternoon on the 2nd of May. At that point, my regimental commander came up and told me that we had to keep the pressure on the enemy and continue forward. I said, "Colonel, I can't. I've used up all my resources. We're out of steam. We can't advance with what I have against those heavy enemy fortifications." (I have to say that the enemy was well equipped. They were well supported by artillery and mortars north of the DMZ. So, we had taken quite a lot of incoming from the enemy.) COL Hull arranged for a battalion from the 2nd ARVN Regiment, a mechanized battalion with tanks and APCs, to help me. They were supposed to move abreast of us as we moved forward back into Dinh To and Thuong Do, which was further north. They were supposed to move on our flank and provide covering fire as we moved forward. They were to fire across our front with 90mm cannon and .50 caliber machine guns, and stay slightly ahead of us. I worked that plan out on the radio with the U.S. Army advisor, not the ARVN commander.

About 1500 we started moving forward with Golf Company leadinhg, followed by Foxtrot. Golf Company had only 40 effectives at that time but they were still raring to go. Vargas, an outstanding combat leader, had been wounded lightly several times during that battle, but was still with his company. My plan was to move them forward until they couldn't go any further. They would be followed by Foxtrot Company to their immediate rear. When the opposition became too great for Golf Company to continue, Foxtrot Company was to move through Golf Company and take up the battle. I thought this would work, particularly with the support we were going to get from the ARVN.

We started out. The boundary line between us and the ARVN was a north-south stream. We fought our way against light opposition through Dinh To. Then as we got into the next hamlet--Thuong Do--we took very heavy fire from the front and the enemy started to counterattack. Then we started taking fire from the left flank. At first I thought it was from the friendlies on our left but, without telling us, they had pulled back. I didn't know that at the time. Our left flank was suddenly in the air. That was the enemy out there hitting our exposed left flank. When I ordered Foxtrot Company to move forward to assist Golf Company, they became bogged down by enemy fire in a rice paddy.

Here we had this small contingent from Golf Company up at the southern edge of Thuong Do and we were getting hit from all sides. I thought we had had it at that time. We called in artillery and naval gunfire. We had all sorts of fire support. Thank God we also had outstanding leadership on the part of J.R. Vargas and a number of his officers and Marines. Somehow, we were able to fight our way back.

It was about this time--1700--that I was hit and knocked down. My sergeant-major was killed and both my radio operators were badly wounded. Vargas dragged me back about 50 meters. And then other Marines pulled me back further. We brought all our wounded out. We couldn't bring the dead out with us. We worked our way back into Dai Do. There's where we set up for the night. Then the enemy just withdrew. I guess they had had enough or they had accomplished whatever their mission was. Or maybe they decided that they couldn't accomplish their mission. But we didn't know that at the time. So the men spent a hairy night right there in the village of Dai Do.

I wasn't with them at that point. I had been medevaced by that time to the hospital ward on the USS *Iwo Jima*. Major Fritz Warren, my ops officer, formed a perimeter up there and held on through the night. The next day, my battalion was relieved by 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines. There was no enemy opposition on the 3rd of May, when they took over. The enemy had pulled all the way back, probably into the DMZ.

What was the nature of your injury?

I was hit in the side by an AK47 round. It lodged between my fourth and fifth vertebrae. It was just nudging my spinal cord and I had no feelings in my legs. I didn't know this until we got back aboard ship. I had a couple of other minor wounds--shrapnel and that sort of thing. I lost quite a bit of blood and passed out a couple of times.

Did you have a corpsman up there with you when you were hit?

No, but there were several to our immediate rear. Three were with Golf Company. We had a large medical platoon which was organic to the battalion. We had two physicians and about 50 enlisted corpsmen led by a Navy chief. Each company had nine corpsmen assigned. They'd put out two with each platoon and they kept one at the company headquarters. So we had a large number of corpsmen spread throughout the battalion.

I couldn't tell you how many we had at the start of that battle because they were also taking casualties. We didn't have a full complement of corpsmen when the battle started, but those we had did a superb job of patching people up as best they could. The best they could do was to try to stop the bleeding. They didn't have time to splint any bone breaks or anything like that because we had to get the wounded to the rear or they would have been overrun.

Who took care of you when you were hit?

Nobody did initially. I was dragged about 50 meters. I was able to fire my weapon. I couldn't get up but I could kind of lean forward to fire my weapon to help stop that enemy counter-attack.

You had an M16?

Yes. I carried one the whole time I had the command.

So they dragged you back beyond the attacking NVA?

Yes, and then MAJ Fritz Warren, our OPSO, brought a group of Marines who had not been wounded from Dai Do up to help us to the rear. They also brought three amphibian tractors. They put the wounded in the tractors, including me, and then they ran us down to the water. There they transferred us to skimmer boats and took us up to the helicopter zone back at Mai Xa Chanh. We did not bring helicopters into the Dai Do area. The reason I didn't allow that was because in order to bring the choppers in, we had to lift our supporting fire--naval gunfire, artillery, etc. I knew that if we lifted our artillery fire, we'd be overrun. We patched up our wounded as best we could in the Dai Do area--stopped the bleeding, gave them a shot of morphine, and loaded them aboard these small boats. They were then taken 8 or 9 kilometers down the river where we had a secured helicopter zone out of the way of enemy fire. That's where our doctors were. They did a triage right there. And this is where the wounded got their first real medical treatment other than what the corpsmen could do. They stopped the bleeding, splinted obvious fracture and, when necessary, pushed the intestines back in.

In your case, you ended up going down the river in one of the skimmer boats?

Yes. That famous picture was taken at the helicopter landing zone. If you look closely, in the background, there's a black doctor--Runas Powers. He did a tremendous job. I don't think he slept for 4 days. I can't say enough for Powers. He was all over the place. The corpsmen thought the world of him. All my corpsmen were just terrific. They saved a lot of lives.

I want to give you some idea of the wounded we had. We had 297 medevacs. And they weren't all our wounded. We had a lot of guys we patched up and put right back into the battle. We also had 81 KIAs in that 3-day battle. That's 81 Marines killed in action. A couple of those were corpsmen so they weren't all Marines, but we considered our corpsmen Marines anyhow. As a matter of fact, some of the best Marines I had were Navy corpsmen. Our chief corpsman, Doc Walter Gorsage, could have been a Marine gunnery sergeant because he ran a tight ship and did a fabulous job training the new corpsmen as they come in and getting their heads screwed on right. He was a fantastic leader.

Throughout that whole battle, the individual enlisted man--lance corporals, corporals--they were superb. I can't say enough about the way they fought. We should have been overrun.

The other thing I want to say is that two other times during that battle we saw large numbers of the enemy out in the open and we were able to pepper them with our artillery, naval gunfire, and air. By the end of the second day, we had priority on air so we had lots of air support and tremendous artillery support. And we had at least two Navy gun ships firing the entire period. We had a cruiser firing 8-inch guns and a destroyer firing its 5-inchers. They supported us until they fired all their ammunition and were then relieved by two other ships who continued firing. So we had constant naval gunfire during that 3-day period.

Were they pretty much right on the money with their gunfire?

Oh, yes. They hit right where we wanted them to. I've been back to Vietnam twice. On my last trip in 1999, I talked to a retired lieutenant general--Tran Van Quan up in Hanoi. He was in command of that entire area from 1965 until 1974, and he remembers that battle quite well. He told me that they suffered very heavy casualties but wouldn't tell me how many. He said he didn't know. But I'm sure he did.

In 1987, I learned from retired MGEN Dennis Murphy that 3 days after the battle an engineer company buried 1,568 NVA bodies out there because the smell was so bad. They were worried about disease so they buried them using bulldozers. And that's not counting the dead that the NVA took back with them. The enemy always tried to hide their dead or remove them from the battlefield. I think we hurt that 320th Division very badly. (During the battle, then MAJ Murphy, was COL Hull's operations officer.)

Please tell me about that famous photograph of you.

There were a couple of civilian photographers up at the triage zone, where the doctors were continuing to patch up the wounded and trying to determine who should be medevaced first. One of the photographers came over to me and took my picture. I was conscious at the time and saw him do it. I had told him not to take my picture but he took it anyway. I told one of my sergeants, "Take that damn camera away and rip the film out."

The photographer was very apologetic. "I'm sorry, sir. Please don't do that. I promise I won't show that to anyone."

I said, "Okay," and we let him keep his camera. We had to keep up some sort of good relations. But that turkey wired that photo back to his organization. I can't remember if it was AP, UPI, or whether he was an independent photographer. He certainly didn't do what he said he was going to do.

At any rate, I wanted to wait until I got back aboard ship to let my wife know I was wounded. I figured that if I told her, she would at least know that I was able to communicate with her and she would know the extent of my wounds. So I told them not to notify next-of-kin. But that picture appeared in a Sunday newspaper the day after the end of the battle. In fact, it appeared on the front page of several newspapers, including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, which was my home town. My sister was there and she called my wife out in California. It was early in the morning out there. And she became hysterical. She asked what had happened to her brother Bill. Ethel ended up calling the base duty officer. He called WESTPAC and they said I had been wounded. They also passed out bad information. They weren't quite sure but they thought I was hit in the legs and I was unable to move.

I wanted to talk with my wife directly but that didn't happen. I didn't talk with her until about 3 days later. They flew me from the *Iwo Jima* over to a hospital ship that had a MARS radio station on it. I was able to talk to my wife from the MARS. Then they flew me back to the *Iwo Jima*.

When you were in that triage area and had this incident with the photographer, was it Dr. Powers who took care of you?

I'm not sure if it was Powers or one of the corpsmen.

What did they do for you?

They stopped the bleeding and gave me a shot of morphine and some serum albumin. They started a bottle in my arm to help prevent shock.

And you were holding it up while you were smoking a cigar.

Why not? I was still smoking in those days.

So they stopped the bleeding, they got you on a chopper, and took you out to the *Iwo Jima*.

They were getting us out of there as quickly as they could. When I got out to the *Iwo Jima*, they took an x-ray and saw where the bullet was lodged. When they removed it, I had feeling in my legs again. A year later, I was as good as I ever was.

Did they do the surgery on the *Iwo Jima*?

Yes. They had an advanced sick bay. They also had an orthopedist, a neurosurgeon, and three general surgeons. That was quite a team. All casualties were initially moved to the *Iwo Jima* until they were filled up and then they moved them to the hospital ship or to Able Med at Dong Ha. The reason we moved as many as we could onto the *Iwo Jima* was because she was the flagship of the Special Landing Force. That's where my battalion rear was located, my headquarters. I stayed aboard in that sick bay until we got to the Philippines. That was fortunate because I was able to finish all my paperwork--fitness reports and recommendations for awards, etc.

So your convalescence was pretty routine. You had no problems.

I was up walking within a couple of weeks. I wasn't supposed to but I did. They sent me back to the States and checked me out there. Then they put me on limited duty. I went to the Army Command and Staff College as an instructor on the staff there. I was there for 3 years. It was a position that didn't require a tremendous amount of physical activity and all the efforts of a battalion commander.

Your experience with Navy medicine was pretty good.

Oh, yes. They did an excellent job. They took the bullet out and stuffed the bullet's path with gauze to keep it open and draining and prevent it from becoming infected. They kept that in there, I think, for a couple of weeks. When they pulled it out, it healed up pretty nicely.

Did they give you your souvenir bullet?

Yes. I've got it somewhere.

Thank you for spending time with me this afternoon and telling me your story.

It was a pleasure to talk with you.